

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RABAT 01472 241548Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 (ISO) W

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4944

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 1472

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO

SUBJ: MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

REF: SECTO 484 (JERUSALEM 658)

1. IN ABSENCE FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI, WHO ON MISSION ABROAD, WE CONTACTED ACTING FONMIN AHMED CHERKAOUI EARLY MARCH 23 AND CONVEYED ORALLY POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL, ALSO PROVIDING WRITTEN VERSION AND FRENCH TRANSLATION. (INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED TOO LATE TO MAKE DEMARCHE BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUSPENSION OF SECRETARY'S MISSION.)

2. CHERKAOUI VOICED SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING REGARDING DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN ACHIEVEMENT OF STEPS TOWARD PEACE AND WARMLY PRAISED SECRETARY'S UNSTINTING EFFORTS THUS FAR. CHERKAOUI SAID HE APPRECIATED NEED FOR PERIOD OF REASSESSMENT AT THIS STAGE AND WELCOMED ASSURANCES OF OUR DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE IN FUTURE TO SEEK FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE. HE ALSO AGREED FULLY WITH NECESSITY OF AVOIDING RECRIMINATIONS AND HASTY CONCLUSIONS, AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN U.S. INTENTIONS FOR FUTURE.

3. I FOLLOWED UP ON SUBJECT WITH CHERKAOUI DURING CALL ON HIM MARCH 24. HE AGAIN TOOK UNDERSTANDING APPROACH, SAYING HE HAD IMMEDIATELY PASSED OUR MESSAGE ON SUSPENSION OF PEACE MISSION TO KING. CHERKAOUI COMMENTED THERE WERE MANY POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN OUR MESSAGE, ESPECIALLY THE PRAISE FOR SADAT.

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HE ALSO FELT MESSAGE REFLECTED OPEN-MINDEDNESS REGARDING

POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING TALKS IN GENEVA. CHERKAOUI ADDED THAT ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING BEGINNING IN CAIRO MARCH 24 WOULD NOW TAKE ON MORE THAN ROUTINE SIGNIFICANCE, AS ARAB POLICY ON PEACE EFFORTS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE MAIN ITEM OF BUSINESS. IN ANY CASE, CHERKAOUI SUMMED UP, U.S. POLICY SEEMED ON RIGHT TRACK.

4. CHERKAOUI WENT ON TO ASK HOW SITUATION WAS DEVELOPING IN FAR EAST, HIS IMPLIED QUESTION BEING WHETHER THERE WOULD BE EFFECTS ON OUR MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS. I RESPONDED THAT I HAD NO SPECIAL INFORMATION ON FAR EASTERN DEVELOPMENTS, ALTHOUGH SITUATION OBVIOUSLY SERIOUS, STRESSING AT SAME TIME THAT U.S. SEARCH FOR PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST WAS ON A FIRM COURSE WHICH COULD BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE DESPITE PROBLEMS ELSEWHERE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PEACE TALKS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975RABAT01472
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750102-0532
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750322/aaaaatjm.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 SECTO 484, 75 (JERUSALEM 65
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <01 DEC 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, MO, (HASSAN II)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006